



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's **ENERGY STAR® Homes Program** promotes the use of high-efficiency technologies and equipment. ENERGY STAR Homes use at least 30% less energy than homes built to meet the national Model Energy Code while maintaining or improving indoor air quality. These fact sheets are designed to help consumers learn more about the energy-efficient improvements to their ENERGY STAR Homes.

# APPRECIATING THE DIFFERENCES OF ENERGY STAR® HOMES

## ENERGY STAR HOME "BRAND NAME" VALUE

Many of a home's energy efficiency features are not obvious. This fact sheet will assist you in evaluating these features in homes you consider purchasing.

This scrutiny is critical because looking closely at an ENERGY STAR Home reveals important benefits that will improve your ultimate comfort and satisfaction.

### FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

Visit potential homes during adverse weather conditions. This allows you to check a home's resistance to harsh weather. By tuning your sense of "feel," you can predict a home's ability to maintain year-round comfort.

**Feel the walls.** More and improved insulation in a home's floors, walls, and attic ensures that the surfaces blanketing your home will more closely match room temperatures. Since it is difficult to maintain constant temperatures when the surfaces surrounding us vary significantly from desired room temperatures, this blanketing adds to a home's overall comfort.

**Feel the windows.** Advanced technology windows result in temperatures 12° F (or more) warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer than inefficient windows. This enables you to position furniture next to your windows to enjoy both the view and comfort. You won't have to worry about condensation on windows or moisture problems in cold weather.

**Feel the tight construction.** Place your hands next to the edges of doors and windows, electric outlets, plumbing penetrations to the exterior, and the wall baseboard trim along outside walls. With tight construction, you'll notice how air-tight the home is, even on the windiest of days, meaning that you won't feel annoying drafts. You'll enjoy peace-of-mind knowing that your home is safe from damaging rain, moisture, dust, pests, and pollen.

**Feel the airflow to all rooms.** While the space conditioning system fan is operating (turn it on manually if not), go to all rooms and place your hands next to the supply grills (typically on the floor at ground level rooms and ceiling in upper level rooms). If the system is properly balanced and sized, consistent levels of air should blow from all grills, even in remote rooms. Consistent airflow ensures comfort and lower utility bills.

**Feel the air temperatures in all rooms.** A well insulated and sealed home with high-quality windows provides even air temperature in all rooms. If you notice any variations in room temperatures, you may compromise comfort and risk costly maintenance problems.

FIGURE 1: THE ENERGY STAR LABEL,  
THE SYMBOL FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY



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### HEAR THE DIFFERENCE

**Listen for less noise from outside.** As you walk through potential homes, listen for noises from outdoor activities and traffic. Notice how a tightly-sealed, well-insulated home with advanced windows provides a quiet atmosphere.

**Listen for less noise from inside.** Make sure the space conditioning system is operating (or turn it on manually). Notice how a well-engineered system with properly-sized components is almost too quiet to hear, yet delivers impressive warmth and cooling.

### LOOK FOR THE DIFFERENCE

**Look for the ENERGY STAR Home label and certificate.** This label certifies that a home has undergone a third-party inspection and testing process verifying that it meets the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) ENERGY STAR Homes Program guidelines. The brand name

assurance of the ENERGY STAR label provides peace-of-mind that you are making a smart purchase and that the home will be positioned for higher resale value.

#### **Look for the Home Energy Rating documentation.**

ENERGY STAR Homes are typically verified to meet EPA guidelines with a third-party energy rating. This rating provides useful information about a home's performance and expected utility bills. It is also an excellent tool for gaining increased resale value.

**Look for longer warranties.** ENERGY STAR Homes are commonly equipped with high-efficiency heating, cooling, and water heating equipment with longer warranties. These warranties provide assurance that your home is better protected against unexpected maintenance costs. Some ENERGY STAR Homes also have their utility bills warranted not to exceed impressively low amounts. This warranty locks in positive cash flow where monthly energy savings exceed small additional monthly mortgage costs attributed to extra energy features.

FIGURE 2: HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS THAT CARRY THE ENERGY STAR LABEL, THE SYMBOL FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

